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GRAHAM KERSHAW

Dialectics Against Silence

I: Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, May

Ducks silhouette the glittering foil, dogs lap
silver mirrors, girls throw bread and scream
at the hunger they feed, shivering legs licked
by white wet shadows. Dialect's voluble stream
forever runs under the dark arch of mind,
black ice-cream scooped in lungfuls of tender
bruised vowels, cold silver consonants biting
the frosted tongue, heart's wet fingertips
stretched to read the cuneiform braille patiently
cracking the gritty Millstone crust of silence,
so that enlightenment might flow like blood
again, so truth might shine like dew.

II: Denmark, Western Australia, December

In the wake of great violence, the inlet is
an escalator descending, molten steps folding
into sand's sleeve. A few last leaves highlighted
by moon, car, kitchen light, then they too
are snuffed out, the wooded hill pared
to a point by the censoring grey-blue blade
of a tempered sky. Karris, shaken by parrots,
play the old mad war melodies brutally,
wordlessly on skylight's black piano, still febrile

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with the glamour of stars, symphonies sadder
than centuries, and all the time we hear
the sea's great engine room falling, falling...